



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**Notes – July 7, 2006**  
**Informal Meeting Of The Licensed Counselor Advisory Committee & Public**  
**Identifying Concepts To Share With The Registered Counselor Task Force**  
**Kent, Washington**

Attendees: Susan Bogni, Public Member, Advisory Committee Chair  
Carl Greenberg, LMFT, Advisory Committee Member  
Judy Roberts, LMHC, Advisory Committee Member  
Philip Brown, LICSW, LMFT, Advisory Committee Member (by phone)  
Lucy Homans, Ed.D., Washington State Psychological Association  
Floyd Else, LMHC, CounselingSeattle.com  
Laura Groshong, LICSW, WSSCSW  
Hoyt Suppes, MSW, NASW Washington  
Bob Nicoloff, Department of Health

- Phil Brown will represent the Licensed Counselor Advisory Committee at the two remaining meetings of the Registered Counselor Task Force. Advisory Committee Vice Chair Lisa Erickson represented the committee at the first meeting of the task force. Lisa, Phil, and Bob were able to discuss the task force activities by phone earlier in the week.
- If the Registered Counselor credential is continued, credential holders should be required to complete continuing education every renewal cycle.
- Registered Counselors who have not yet completed at least a masters level degree should be required to be supervised.
- Counselors in private practice who do not have a degree and are not supervised create a risk to the public.
- Different kinds of supervision would be required depending if the counselor is working toward a degree vs they are post degree such as in an internship
- A decision needs to be made as to whether the intention of this credential is serve as a temporary mechanism toward another license or if the credential can be permanent. The appropriate requirements would be dependent on this decision.



- The credential should be abolished; it doesn't make sense to exempt a large number of counselors who provide mental health services to the public from education and examination requirements.
- Provide a mechanism and timeline for individuals in this category to move to licensure; if they fail to meet the standards in the timeline, they should be prohibited from practicing further.
- At the time masters level counselor licenses were created, the Legislature was concerned that they didn't want to put long time counselors who lacked the degree out of business. This is the only reason registered counselor was created; it was not a public protection motive.
- Another big area of decision is whether it is intent that the practice of counseling or the title of counselor is the focus of regulation.
- The State of Louisiana regulates the practice of counseling; check their state law for ideas on how to do this.
- Another concept is tiered licensure, provided it is clear to the public.
- For individuals who serve in support roles in counseling, consider calling them Psych Technicians or Mental Health Technicians
- A masters level degree should be the minimum to practice any kind of counseling
- Besides a degree, don't forget that training and experience are critical to ensure competence.
- Licensure examinations should also be required.
- If you eliminate registered counselor, what is to prevent the same person from staying in business by calling themselves a coach or an educator.
- Even though it is the most difficult to accomplish and define, the State should regulate the practice of counseling, not just titles. This would provide the greatest protection to the public.
- An assumption inherent in many of the suggestions is that the agency for which the counselor works is capable and can competently supervise practice. This often is an incorrect assumption. You shouldn't look at the regulation of people in isolation without looking at how agencies are regulated.
- Supervision standards also need to be defined.

- The public will remain confused until significant changes are made to counselor titles.
- Current registered counselors should not be grandfathered under the new requirements.
- Other professions have para-professionals, why not counseling.
- Change the title to “Unlicensed Counselor” like Colorado has done. This would be pretty clear to the public.
- If registered counselor is to a transition credential, individuals should be required to declare their intentions for licensure within one year, file a plan with DOH, and be held to a strict time limit.
- Fees will need to increase significantly to cover the administration of expanded requirements.
- Public education will be the key element, regardless of what changes are put in place. Be sure to set aside significant resources for this education. Otherwise the public will remain confused and continue to be at risk.